

# POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY AGE

## INTRODUCTION

### GENERAL

The fourth series of Population bulletins presents for each State detailed data on a number of the general characteristics of the population, each cross-classified by age. These statistics are based on the Sixteenth Decennial Census of Population, taken as of April 1, 1940. The subjects included are citizenship, marital status, relationship to head of household, school attendance, highest grade of school completed, and employment status. Because of the amount of detail and cross-classification in the tables, the presentation is restricted to the larger areas, namely, the State, the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm parts of the State, and urban places of 50,000 inhabitants or more.

**Related reports.**—In the first series of Population bulletins, entitled "Number of Inhabitants," the total population on April 1, 1940, was given for all of the political subdivisions of each State, for metropolitan districts, and for census tracts.

The second series of Population bulletins, entitled "Characteristics of the Population," presented some of the simpler classifications of population characteristics for the State, urban and rural, and for counties, urban places, rural incorporated places of 1,000 to 2,500, minor civil divisions (townships, etc.), wards of cities of 50,000 or more, and metropolitan districts. Subjects included were sex, age, race, nativity, urban-rural residence, citizenship, country of birth, school attendance, highest grade of school completed, and general characteristics of the labor force.

The third series of Population bulletins, entitled "The Labor Force—Occupation, Industry, Employment, and Income," presented detailed statistics on the labor force for the State by urban and rural residence, and for cities of 100,000 or more.

A supplementary report is planned which will present statistics for Negroes and individual minor races in selected areas on subjects covered in the present bulletins. Internal migration statistics for the general population also remain to be presented.

Additional general population statistics for the United States, regions, divisions, States, and large cities will be presented in publications based upon tabulations of a 5-percent cross section of the census returns. These publications will give supplementary information on the subjects covered by the present series of bulletins, as well as statistics on nativity, parentage, and mother tongue of the white population, and country of origin of the foreign white stock. Other publications will be devoted to the presentation of sample data on families and fertility, for regions, divisions, States, and large cities.

**Arrangement of tables.**—In the present bulletin, the tables are grouped according to subject. Tables 1 to 4 deal with single years of age, table 5 with citizenship of the foreign-born white, tables 6 to 11 with marital status, tables 12 and 13 with relationship to head of household, table 14 with quasi households, tables 15 and 16 with school attendance, tables 17 to 23 with education, table 24 with employment status by 5-year age periods, and table 25 with school attendance by employment status. Within each subject data are presented first for the State as a whole, followed successively by statistics for the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm areas, and for cities of the size groups included.

**Availability of unpublished data.**—The statistics in this bulletin presented for States and for cities having 500,000 inhabitants or more represent practically all of the data tabulated in this phase of the 1940 program. Although similar statistics have been tabulated for cities of 50,000 to 500,000, it is not possible, because of space limitations, to publish the data in full detail. Likewise, statistics shown for the population of all races have been tabulated for white and nonwhite population separately.

These unpublished statistics, however, can be made available upon request, for the cost of transcribing or reproducing them. Requests for such statistics, addressed to the Director of the Census, Washington, D. C., will receive a prompt reply which will include an estimate of the cost of preparing the data.

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND EXPLANATIONS

In some cases the definitions of terms and explanations given below are abridged from the fuller explanations appearing in the second series of Population bulletins.

**Urban and rural areas.**—Urban population, as defined by the Bureau of the Census, is in general that residing in cities and other incorporated places having 2,500 inhabitants or more. In addition, certain densely populated townships or other civil divisions, not incorporated as municipalities, have been classified as urban under special rules. The remainder of the population is classified as rural and is subdivided into the rural-farm population, which comprises all rural residents living on farms, without regard to occupation, and the rural-nonfarm population, which comprises the remaining rural population. (For further details for each State, see the first series Population bulletin.)

**Sex and color.**—Because of the importance of the classification of population by sex, all of the data in this bulletin are presented separately for males and females.

The color classification used in this bulletin is limited to white and nonwhite; and even this two-fold classification is restricted for the most part to areas in which there are substantial numbers of nonwhites. The nonwhite population in most areas where it is important consists largely of Negroes, though there are areas in which there are fairly large numbers of Indians, Chinese, and Japanese. The second series of Population bulletins shows the distribution of the population by race, and a report to be issued later will contain, for the more significant areas, data on age, marital status, and education for Negroes, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, etc.

Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or of other nonwhite race were returned as white in 1940. Such persons were designated Mexican in 1930 and were classified as nonwhite. The 1930 data for whites and nonwhites published in this bulletin have been adjusted to conform to the 1940 definition.

Statistics for nonwhites in the Southern States and Missouri are presented separately for the State, for the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm parts of the State, and for cities with 10,000 or more nonwhite inhabitants. For Northern and Western States, data for nonwhites are also shown separately for those States or urban and rural parts of States where the nonwhite

population is important,<sup>1</sup> and for cities with 10,000 or more nonwhite inhabitants. (For the State as a whole, figures are always shown separately for the white population whenever figures are shown separately for the nonwhite population.)

In tables 1 and 2, however, the data for single years of age are shown invariably by color for the State as a whole and for cities of 500,000 or more, respectively. Table 14, presenting data on quasi households, always includes color for the State, urban and rural, and cities of 100,000 or more. Table 3 is always restricted to the white population, table 5 to the foreign-born white population, and table 6 does not include any color classification.

**Nativity.**—Table 3 of this bulletin presents figures showing the native and foreign-born white population by age and sex, including single years from 35 to 100 and over. In the classification by nativity, a person born in the United States or in any of its territories or possessions is counted as native. Likewise included as native is the small group of persons who, although born in a foreign country or at sea, were American citizens by birth because their parents were American citizens. The native population is not here subdivided according to nativity of parents as has been done in previous censuses. Information on this subject, however, based on sample data, will be presented in later publications.

**Age.**—The age classification is based on the age of the person at his last birthday before the date of the census, that is, the age of the person in completed years. In the 1940 census tabulations, when the age of a person was not reported, it was estimated on the basis of other information on the Population schedule, such as marital status, school attendance, employment status, age of other members in the family, etc. The number of persons for whom age was estimated represented less than 0.2 percent of the population; and since the age estimates were based on actual age distributions of various population groups, the resulting age statistics are consistent with known age data. The number of persons of unknown age is shown for earlier censuses in the comparative tables.

Single years of age, from under 1 year to 100 years and over, are presented by color and sex in table 1 for the State, and the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm parts of the State; and in table 2 for cities of 500,000 or more. For urban places of 50,000 to 500,000, single years of age are presented by sex for persons under 5 years old in table 4; and for those 5 to 24 years old in tables 17 and 18, in connection with the highest grade of school completed. Single years of age for those 35 to 100 years old and over are presented for the white population by nativity and sex in table 3 for the State, urban and rural, and for cities of 500,000 or more. The presentation of nativity by single years of age is limited to those 35 years old and over, since there were relatively few foreign born under 35 years of age in 1940.

In other tables, notably those on marital status, the population 15 years old and over is shown by 5-year age groups to 85 and over for all areas.

Median ages (computed on the basis of 5-year intervals) are presented in tables 1, 2, and 3. The median age may be defined as that age which divides the population into two equal groups—one-half being older and one-half younger than the median.

<sup>1</sup> For the State as a whole, statistics are shown by color when the nonwhite population of the State *outside of urban places of 50,000 or more* amounted to 50,000 or more, or comprised at least 10,000 persons and was at least 10 percent of the total population of the State.

Statistics are shown separately for nonwhites in the urban part of a State when the nonwhite urban population *outside of urban places of 50,000 or more* amounted to 50,000 or more, or comprised at least 10,000 persons and was at least 10 percent of the total urban population of the State.

Statistics are shown separately for nonwhites in the rural-nonfarm or the rural-farm part of the State whenever the nonwhites in the area numbered 50,000 or more, or formed at least 10 percent of the total population of the area.

As revealed in the distribution by single years of age (and to a lesser extent in the distribution by 5-year periods), there are some irregularities in the age distribution which are due to inaccuracies in the census returns. In the 1940 census, as in previous censuses, some ages were misstated, either intentionally or through ignorance of the true age on the part of the person giving the information. Where the age is not accurately known, there is a tendency to report it as a multiple of 5 or as an even number. There is a tendency for men to concentrate on age 21, and a tendency for understatement of age on the part of women in certain age groups. The returns also exaggerate the number of centenarians, particularly among nonwhites. In general, the degree of inaccuracy in reported ages is greater for adults than for children.

A comparison of the 1940 age data for the United States with a computation of the expected survivors from the 1930 population indicates that the number of persons enumerated in 1940 as 65 years of age and over was appreciably in excess of the number that might be expected to have survived from the group 55 years old and over in 1930. This comparison also indicates that the number of persons 55 to 64 years of age in 1940 was somewhat smaller than the number that might be expected to have survived from the age group 45 to 54 years in 1930. It is possible that the enactment of old-age insurance and old-age assistance legislation during the decade may have led to some overstatement of age in 1940 by persons actually 55 to 64 years old, but it is also possible that persons in this age range may have understated their ages in 1930. It is hoped that more definite conclusions may be reached after further study of the figures now available.

The enumeration of children under 5, and especially infants under 1, was incomplete in 1940 as in previous censuses, the underenumeration being particularly apparent in the case of the nonwhite population. The underenumeration of children is not peculiar to the United States census. It has been noted in the British census returns and in the census returns from some of the countries of continental Europe.

**Citizenship of the foreign-born white.**—The classification of the foreign-born white in regard to citizenship embraces two major categories, naturalized citizen and alien. The alien category is further subdivided into those having first papers and those who have taken no steps toward becoming naturalized ("No papers"). There is an additional group designated "Citizenship not reported," comprising persons for whom the enumerator secured no report as to citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

The "first papers" constitute the declaration of intention to become a citizen of the United States, a declaration which may be made by any eligible alien 18 years of age and over at any time after arrival in the United States. Citizenship by naturalization is open only to white persons, persons of African nativity or descent, and descendants of races indigenous to the Western Hemisphere. Foreign-born Chinese, Japanese, and other Asiatics are not eligible for citizenship except under rare circumstances.

Since 98.5 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States in 1940 was white, no figures are given here for foreign-born nonwhites. The statistics presented in table 5 of this bulletin are for the foreign-born white population of the State, the urban, rural-nonfarm, and rural-farm parts of the State, and urban places of 50,000 or more containing at least 10,000 foreign-

<sup>2</sup> At the census of 1940 there were 825,072 foreign-born white persons in the United States reported as of unknown citizenship status. It would appear that this group consisted predominantly of persons who had not applied for any papers or who had applied for their first papers only. This conclusion is based partly upon the fact that the total number of foreign-born aliens plus those of unknown citizenship status is approximately equal to the number of aliens registered under the Alien Registration Act of 1940.

born whites. Separate statistics are shown for each sex, classified by age. Persons under 35 are subdivided into two groups—those under 21 and those 21 to 34 years old, but for persons above 35, who comprise the great majority of the foreign-born white population, age is shown by 5-year periods.

**Marital status.**—Inquiry regarding marital status was first made in the Census of 1880, but the results were not tabulated; the earliest Federal census figures for marital status are therefore those for 1890. The marital status of the population at each census from 1890 to 1940 is shown for the State in table 6.

In the classification by marital status four major groups are shown: single, married, widowed, and divorced. These terms refer to marital status at the time the census was taken. Persons classified as "married" comprise, therefore, both those who have been married only once and those who have remarried after being divorced or widowed. Since it is probable that some divorced persons are reported as single, married, or widowed, the census returns doubtless understate somewhat the actual number of divorced persons who have not remarried.

The category "married" is further divided into "married, spouse present" and "married, spouse absent." This classification appears in the Population census reports for the first time in 1940. Statistics for these groups are presented by sex in table 11 for the State, urban and rural, and for cities of 100,000 or more.

A person was classified as "married, spouse present" if the person's husband or wife was reported as a member of the household in which the person was enumerated. The group "married, spouse absent" consists of married persons whose spouses were not living in the same household at the time of the census. The latter group includes, therefore, married persons whose families have been broken by separation (often preceding divorce), immigrants whose husbands or wives were left abroad, husbands or wives of persons enumerated as inmates of institutions, and other married persons whose usual place of residence is not the same as that of their husbands or wives, including soldiers, sailors, men in labor camps, etc., and their wives.

In both 1930 and 1940 the enumerator failed to report marital status for a small number of persons. All these persons were classified as single in 1940, whereas in 1930 only those under 18 were included among the single and the remainder were shown as "unknown."

Tables 7, 8, and 9 present marital status for persons 15 years old and over for the State, urban and rural, for cities of 100,000 or more, and for cities of 50,000 to 100,000, respectively. In these tables the statistics are presented only for persons 15 years old and over. In table 10, however, statistics on marital status are presented for persons 14 to 34 years old by single years of age for the State, urban and rural, and cities of 500,000 or more. These ages cover the period in which the proportion married increases sharply. Marital status was not tabulated for persons under 14 years of age.

In selected areas 1940 data on marital status are given by color as well as by sex and age. The 1930 data by color, where included, are given by sex but not by age.

**Private household.**—The term "private household," as used in the 1940 census, includes the related family members and the unrelated lodgers and servants or hired hands who live in the same dwelling unit and share common housekeeping arrangements. A person living alone or a small group of unrelated persons sharing the same living accommodations as "partners" is also counted as a private household. A family residing permanently or for an indefinite period in an apartment hotel is counted as a private household. The number of heads of private households is equal to the number of private households and is directly comparable with the number of private families in 1930.

**Quasi household.**—A quasi household is a group of persons not living in private households, such as those living in a board-

ing or lodging house, an institution, a school, a labor camp, a military or naval post, or the transient population of a hotel, or the crew of a vessel. If a household reports 11 or more lodgers, it is classified as a quasi household (specifically, as a lodging house) rather than as a private household.

Heads of quasi households are usually managers or officers of institutions, hotels, lodging houses, or similar establishments. In a few instances, where no logical head was returned for the quasi household, the first member of the household was arbitrarily designated as the head. Thus, the number of heads of quasi households also represents the number of quasi households. This number is comparable with the number of quasi-family groups in 1930.

**Relationship to head of household.**—The 1940 census was the first from which a tabulation was made of the relationship of each person to the head of his household. The tables on this subject give the number of persons returned in each of the categories: Head of a household; wife, child, grandchild, parent, or other relative of head; lodger, servant or hired hand; and head or other member of a quasi-household group. The following sections describe the categories of relationship shown in tables 12 and 13.

**Head of private household.**—The head of a private household is usually a married man and the chief breadwinner in the family. In some cases, however, the head is a parent of the chief earner or is the only adult member of the household.

**Wife.**—The total number of females shown under the heading "wife" is ordinarily somewhat less than the total number of married women shown in tables presenting statistics on marital status, since the category "wife" in the relationship tables includes only wives of heads of households and excludes other married women who may be living in the household. The number of "wives" is equal to the number of "normal" households (households with head and wife present).

**Child.**—This category includes sons and daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children of the head regardless of their age or marital status. It excludes sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and, of course, any children of the head no longer living in the household.

**Grandchild.**—This class comprises all persons living in the household who are sons, daughters, stepchildren, or adopted children of a child of the head.

**Parent.**—This classification comprises both parents and parents-in-law of the head if living in the household.

**Other relative.**—This class includes such relatives of the head as sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, nephews, brothers, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and great-grandchildren if these are members of the household.

**Lodger.**—All persons in private households who are not related to the head, except servants and hired hands, are counted as lodgers.<sup>3</sup> Among these persons are lodgers and partners, and their wives and children. The few relatives of servants who are not themselves servants in the family, but live in the household are also included here.

**Servant or hired hand.**—This category consists of all employees of the heads of private households who usually reside in the household with their employer. The main types of such employees are cooks, maids, nurses, and hired farm hands.

Table 12 presents basic data (not cross-classified by age) on the population both in, and outside of, private households, for the State, urban and rural, and cities of 50,000 or more. Table 13 shows the population in private households by age, sex, and relationship to head, and table 14 shows the population outside of private households by sex, color, and broad age groups. Both tables are presented for the State, urban and rural, and for cities of 100,000 or more.

**School attendance.**—The school attendance statistics for 1940 are based on the replies to the enumerator's inquiry as to whether the person had attended, or been enrolled in, any regular school or college between March 1 and April 1, 1940. Night schools, extension schools, or vocational schools are not included unless

<sup>3</sup> In the 1930 family tabulation, hired hands living with the family were counted as lodgers. This doubtless accounted for a considerable fraction of the whole number of families with lodgers.

they are a part of the regular school system; and no correspondence schools are included.

The school attendance question in the census of 1930 applied to a somewhat longer period, namely, the seven months between the preceding September 1 and the census date (April 1). Furthermore, in the 1930 census the question was not restricted as to the type of school or college. The shortening of the period to which the question applied undoubtedly accounts for many of the apparent declines during the decade in the proportion attending school at given ages. Further, there were a number of areas in which the rural schools were closed for the entire month of March 1940; and, although the children in these areas were for the most part still enrolled in school, negative answers were generally given to the school attendance question, since the children were not actually in attendance. Moreover, in those urban areas where midyear graduations are important, the mid-year graduates would have been returned in 1940 as not attending school—but in 1930 they would have been returned as attending.

The number and percentage of persons 5 to 24 years old attending school in 1940 are presented by sex and single years of age for the State, its urban and rural areas, and cities of 500,000 or more in table 15. Similar data, for age groups rather than single years, are presented for urban places of 50,000 to 500,000 in table 16. Additional statistics on school attendance by sex and single years of age, cross-classified with highest grade of school completed, are given in tables 17 and 18 for all areas including urban places of 50,000 or more.

**Highest grade of school completed.**—In 1940 the census, for the first time, included a question on the formal educational attainment of each person. The question on the schedule asked for the last full grade that the person had completed in the regular school system—public, private, or parochial school, college, or university. This question replaced the inquiry on illiteracy included in previous censuses and provides data on educational status, a characteristic that is significant for every population group, especially in combination with other characteristics.

All of the tables presenting data on the highest grade of school completed (tables 17 to 23) show figures by sex for all the areas covered by this bulletin—the State, urban and rural, and urban places of 50,000 or more. Persons 5 to 24 years old attending school are classified by highest grade of school completed, sex, and single years of age, in table 17. These persons may be assumed to have been attending the grade above the one given as completed. From these data it is possible to measure the extent of acceleration or retardation among the school children in each area. Similar data are shown in table 18 for those 5 to 24 years old not attending school. Finally, the highest grade of school completed is given in table 19 for persons 20 years old and over by sex and 5-year age periods.

Several additional tables are also included, summarizing the educational statistics in terms of the median year of school completed by persons at given ages (tables 21 to 23) and also the median age of persons having completed given grades (table 20). The median year of school completed may be defined as the year which divides the population group into equal parts, one-half having completed more schooling and one-half having completed less schooling than the median. These medians are expressed in terms of a continuous series of numbers representing years of school completed. For example, the completion of the first year of high school is indicated by 9 and of the last year of college by 16. For the sake of comparability, the first year of high school is uniformly represented by 9, although there are some areas with only 7 years of elementary school.

**Labor force.**—Table 24 of this bulletin contains a cross-classification of employment status by sex and single years of

age, for the age group 14 to 24, and by 5-year age groups from 25 to 75 and over. This represents an extension of the age classification presented in the third series of Population bulletins and provides the basis for determining more exactly the turning points in rates of employment and movement into and out of the labor force.<sup>4</sup> Table 24 includes figures for the State, for urban and rural areas, and for cities of 100,000 or more.

Table 25 presents the number and proportion of employed persons among those attending school and among those not attending school by single years of age from 14 to 24 years, by sex, for the State, for urban and rural areas, and for cities of 100,000 or more. These data are provided to show the relationship between employment and school attendance during the period when most persons enter the labor force.

**Employment status.**—The classification by employment status in the 1940 Census of Population was obtained from questions regarding the activity during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, of all persons 14 years old and over. These questions permitted a classification into two large groups: (a) Persons in the labor force, including those at work, those with a job but temporarily absent from work, those on public emergency work, and those seeking work; and (b) persons not in the labor force. The latter group includes persons reported as engaged in own home housework, those in school, those unable to work, all inmates of penal and mental institutions and homes for the aged, infirm, and needy, regardless of their activity during the census week; other persons not at work and not having a job, not on public emergency work, and not seeking work; and persons for whom employment status was not reported.

**Employed (except on public emergency work).**—The group classified as employed includes (a) persons who worked for pay or profit at any time during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, in private work or nonemergency Federal, State, or local government work, or who assisted without pay on a family farm or in a family business; and (b) persons not actually at work and not seeking work during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, but with jobs, businesses, or professional enterprises from which they were temporarily absent because of vacation, illness, industrial dispute, bad weather, or lay-off not exceeding four weeks with definite instructions to return to work on a specific date. The group "Employed (except on public emergency work)" includes not only employees but also proprietors, farmers, other self-employed persons, and unpaid family workers.

**On public emergency work.**—This category includes persons who, during the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, were at work on, or assigned to, public emergency work projects conducted by the Work Projects Administration (WPA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), or State or local work relief agencies. In the interpretation of the data for persons on public emergency work, allowance must be made for the fact that considerable numbers of persons actually on public emergency work were returned in the census as employed on private or nonemergency government work, seeking work, or in school.<sup>5</sup>

**Seeking work.**—This category represents persons without work of any sort in the week of March 24 to 30, 1940, who were actively seeking work during that week.

<sup>4</sup> These data and those presented in table 25, which more logically should have been presented with the other labor force statistics in the third series of Population bulletins, are presented in this series because it was possible to obtain them more economically as a byproduct of the detailed age statistics than in the earlier labor force tabulations.

<sup>5</sup> See the introductory section of the third series of Population bulletins for a discussion of the misclassification of public emergency workers.